

Our North and Central China Missions.



The Bridge at Tsao Shih.

[Photo by the late Charles Robertson]

NORTH CHINA.

OUR work in North China is carried on in the Province of Chihli at four centres, namely in Peking, Tientsin, T'sangchou and Siao-chang. In Peking and Tientsin it is, of course, of the city type with a certain amount of work in the surrounding country, while T'sangchou and Siao-chang are our Head Stations for purely country work.

In Peking and Tientsin we have our large Educational Institutions, which are carried on either by us as a mission or in union with other missions.

Peking, the capital of the Republic, is a place of strategic importance ; here Parliament meets, and here also the President resides. Union work in the Province of Chihli has reached a high state of perfection, and in Peking one of the largest union educational schemes on the mission field has been in operation for several years. In the Arts and Theological departments of this Union several missions have combined, and in the Medical College, which is the contribution of the L.M.S., all the missions have united. These missions are the American Board, American Presbyterian, Methodist Episcopal, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Medical Missionary Association of London, and ourselves ; besides these one or two others whose headquarters are elsewhere co-operate to some extent.

The Medical College is the best of its kind in China, and among its over one hundred students are men from nearly all the provinces. The late

Empress Dowager, H.M. Tzu Hsi, contributed to its funds and it is the only Christian College in China whose degrees have been recognised by the Government. Many of the students are being trained to become medical missionaries; the evangelistic opportunities of the College are very great and much fruit has resulted.

The hospital work in association with this institution is a very extensive one. The medical work has been carried on for about 50 years and was commenced by the well-known Dr. Lockhart, our pioneer missionary to Peking. No other form of work more readily brings us into touch with all classes. In the old days members of the Imperial family, princes, dukes and others were among our patients, as well as officials of all grades, and the work is still appreciated as much as ever by the influential classes of the Republic. The influence of the hospital has also extended for hundreds of miles into the surrounding country. Not only has this work borne rich spiritual fruit, but it has helped to create an atmosphere among high and low which has done much for the success of the Gospel.

Besides union work along educational lines, a splendid union evangelistic organisation exists, in which all the missionaries of the various Societies take part, not only those who are primarily engaged in church and evangelistic work, but also doctors, teachers and professors in our schools and colleges, and Chinese as well as foreigners. This evangelistic work is carried on in churches and street chapels, at fairs and temple festivals, and among both men and women.

Some country work is carried on by our mission in about half a dozen centres in the district stretching towards Tientsin, and in Peking itself church and evangelistic work is prosecuted in chapels at four centres.

In Tientsin we have our great and well-known Anglo-Chinese College. H. E. Yuan Shih-K'ai, the President of the Republic, took a great interest in the College, and the Viceroy's Hall, to which he contributed liberally, contains a full length portrait of the great man himself.

Not only is there splendid evangelistic work of a unique kind done among the students in the College, but the Anglo-Chinese Church, which meets in our building, is a great power for good and is influencing classes, merchants, officials and others, which it would otherwise be extremely difficult to reach. Besides this Church there are two others in which ordinary church work is carried on. There is also dispensary work in the city and evangelistic work in two or three outstations in the near country, while close to the College is the still active hospital where the famous Dr. Mackenzie did his great work. He, like many other Chinese missionaries, exerted a great influence on the governing classes, and some of his students are to-day in high posts in official circles.

In T'sangchou and Siao-chang we have extensive country fields than which there are no more ideal spheres for missionary work in China. These two Head Stations, which are situated in the country S.W. of Tientsin and in which our missionary force resides, are the centres of a district for which the L.M.S. is responsible—comprising in the case of T'sangchou about 10 counties, and in the case of Siao-chang, 14 counties, and the total population of the area is about 8,000,000. We have numerous sub-stations throughout this region where vigorous itinerant work is carried on, and in some of them strong churches are being formed.

Our various activities include a central hospital at each head station, and dispensary and hospital work, staffed by Chinese from the Medical College, is being organised at various points in the district to meet more effectually the needs of this vast area.

Boys and girls are being taught in our schools, the best of whom will be sent on to our higher institutions in the city to complete their education,

and the training of Biblewomen and preachers is a marked feature of our labours. The Theological Training Institute at T'sangchou prepares men of lower educational attainments than those trained in the Theological College at Peking, and to complete the evangelisation of the district we need literally hundreds of such workers.

With a little more help from home our missionary enterprise in North China would be able to do its share of the work for the evangelisation of the province of Chihli, a piece of territory about twice the size of England and Wales, and containing a population of nearly 21,000,000.

In our North China Mission we have :—Church members and adherents, 4,421 ; Chinese workers, teachers, etc., 120 ; scholars, 900 ; hospital visits from out-patients, 76,000 ; in-patients, 1,770.

CENTRAL CHINA.

If Peking is the head, Hankow is the heart of China. Situated with the other two great cities, Wuchang and Hanyang, in the central province of Hupeh, it has connections with the east and west, the north and the south of the Chinese Republic, and these connections will become much more intimate when the present great railway schemes are brought to completion ; not only will the Yangtze and the other rivers of this region continue to convey commerce to and from Hankow, but railways running north, south, east and west will meet at that great centre and make it a more important place than ever before.

The Hankow group of cities comprises Wuchang, the capital of the province, on the right bank of the Yangtze ; and two other cities, Hankow and Hanyang, on the opposite bank but divided from one another by the river Han which flows into the Yangtze. Hanyang has probably a population of 400,000, Wuchang about half a million and Hankow about 870,000. Hankow is the great commercial centre and there, besides the Chinese city, are English, Russian, German, French and Japanese settlements.

The province of Hupeh is considerably larger than England and Wales. The population numbers over 35 millions or about 495 to the square mile. It is the third province in China for density of population. Our work in the province is carried on at five centres and each of these is responsible for a large amount of work in the surrounding country. These five centres are Hankow, Wuchang, Hwang-pei, Siao-kan and Tsao-shih.

A better centre than the city of Hankow for evangelistic work could hardly be conceived, and we have unique facilities for prosecuting it. Our hospital for men and women has long been known, and patients come from far and near and get, with the healing of the body, a knowledge of the Gospel. Our doctors have tried to multiply themselves by training men in the medical school, and some of the old students are now doing splendid medical missionary work. Another special feature is the training of women nurses for work in the women's hospitals.

Besides the immense numbers of people who are reached through our fine medical work, we have three commodious chapels in various parts of the city and one in the city of Hanyang, and, in the evenings especially, large audiences gather in these buildings to hear the Gospel.

Hankow is looked upon as the centre of our far-reaching Central China Mission, and the connection between all our churches scattered throughout the region is maintained by a system of Church Councils, representatives from which meet annually to consider the work of the whole field.

Outside the city itself we have the large compound in which the Griffith John College is built. It is our aim that the students here should be carried on to a collegiate course and then to the classes of the proposed Wu-Han

University, which we hope to see established at this centre. Normal work to prepare teachers for our numerous schools, and theological work to prepare teachers for the churches of our vast district are both carried on in the Griffith John College.

We have very efficient training for Biblewomen, and perhaps in none of our centres is such valuable women's work carried on as throughout the Central China District. The Hankow Biblewomen's Training Home has been in existence for 14 years. The course of study lasts from two to three years, and women have been trained not only for the work at the centre, but for the outstations also.

The great feature of our Wuchang work is the girls' school, in which the pupils number between 70 and 80. When one thinks of the influence these girls are going to wield as teachers and mothers one begins to realise the importance of this department. The need everywhere for girl teachers is very great, and this school has not only supplied teachers to our own schools, but also to the schools of other missions.

Medical work among men and women is also carried on at Wuchang, and the opportunities for getting into contact with the student and official circles are very numerous, and our fine women's medical work gains an entrance for the Gospel among the wives and daughters of the higher classes.

Besides the purely city work, our missionaries at Hankow and Wuchang push evangelistic enterprise into the surrounding country and work is carried on from Wuchang in two counties and from Hankow in two other counties. The country head stations Hwang-pei, Siao-kan and Tsao-shih are responsible for about nine counties, *i.e.* about three to each station. Thus, besides the work in the large cities of Hankow, Han-yang and Wuchang, which of course we carry on in common with other missions, we have the sole responsibility for 14 counties in which there are probably about 6,000 towns and villages. To do this work with minimum efficiency, that is to be able to establish churches which will themselves take the responsibility of evangelising the district thoroughly, we ought to add between 200 and 300 Chinese preachers to our staff.

We are now considering ways and means to deal effectively with this training problem. Our great aim in Hankow is to develop the Theological College up to the very highest standard, so as to turn out men who shall be leaders, and at Siao-kan to establish a training institute similar to the one which exists at Tsangchou in North China, from which we can send forth men who shall evangelise the whole district and gather self-supporting, self-propagating churches at strategic centres.

Siao-kan, Tsao-shih and Hwang-pei are all important medical mission centres, and the Leper Home at Siao-kan, which will soon have accommodation for about 170 lepers, has long been known throughout China as a model of its kind. Each station also carries on elementary education, and the women's work at Siao-kan is one of the best pieces of women's work we have. There are about 100 names on the roll in the women's school, and meetings for women are held in all quarters of the city.

The L.M.S. could not be more strategically placed than in its North and Central China Missions. We have a definite policy and programme, and with the necessary support we can exercise a tremendous influence on China at this plastic and all-important crisis in her history.

In our Central China Mission we have :—Church members and adherents, about 10,000 ; Chinese workers, teachers, etc., 100 ; scholars, 565 ; hospital visits, 50,289 ; in-patients, 3,107.